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AUTHOR	[Hubbell, Robert N.]
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Abstract

The present college scene is in a state of flux and confusion. Several problems are receiving major priority: (1) student stress, (2) alienation of students, and (3) activism among students. Reasons for the above problems could include: (1) individual and inter-group stress, and (2) tension between groups. Procedures which have been utilized on campuses to deal with some of the intra-personal and inter-group stress include: (1) a human relations workshop during which leaders could maximize self awareness, establish relationships with other students, and establish a student staffed workshop for other students; (2) faculty student encounters, established in the evening or on weekends, several times during the year; and (3) campus wide discussions of relevant issues with the large group breaking into smaller groups for discussions. Problem solving designs include: (1) a fantasy model for estimating future conditions, (2)the exchange of tapes generated by role groups, and the discussion of these tapes; (3) a half day workshop involving faculty, students, and administration; and (4) a black-white microlab confrontation model. Each design is thoroughly explained. (Author/KJ)

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HUMAN RELATIONS PROCEDURES RELEVANT TO UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Introduction

Considered from almost any vantage point the present college scene is in a state of flux and confusion. Recently there has been an increasing wealth of documentation in the popular press and in professional journals related to the following problems:

- Evidence of considerable student stress in the college setting, which is nonproductive and destructive for the students and the institution.

- Alienation of students from the faculty and administration which makes significant participation in joint problem solving very difficult.

- Activism among students, which is a potential source of energy and creativity for the building of healthy learning environments in the areas of governance, classroom, counseling, student activities and community development.

In recent years there has been an increasing concern in higher education with innovations, student participation in educational administration and the quality of the learning environment. These areas have always been of some concern. However, increased enrollments, the growth of new colleges and universities on a large scale, demands of youth in all segments of our society for more freedom, and the major changes in the college student culture brought about by factors such as drugs, contraceptive pills, the throwing off of parietal restrictions, and the desire to be involved bring an urgency to the development of better ways of involving all segments of the college community in the building of an environment conducive to learning and growth.

Recently a proposal by the National Training Laboratories Institute for Applied Behavioral Science to the Federal Government suggested a rationale and approach to the above-mentioned problems.

A. Individual and Inter-Group Stress. The learning environment within the contemporary college campus is being strongly affected by two kinds of stress, individual and inter-group. Nonproductive individual stress takes the form of anxiety, frustration, withdrawal, alienation, loneliness and various overt and destructive acts. Sources of these stresses are many and include such varied factors as disturbed relationships with parents, inability to develop meaningful relationships with peers, reaction to societal tensions and the continuing liberalization of our culture. Expectations and desires of students that are violated and frustrated by inadequate, irrelevant and impersonal learning opportunities provide a more immediate source of tension.

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B. Tension Between Groups. A second kind of stress which is closely related is the tension between groups in the college community. These tensions are often the result of people grouping themselves together to gain enough power to enter into conflict which would be intolerable for the individual. Although the most dramatic inter-group conflicts are currently centered in the student-faculty/administration level, similar tensions can easily be found between departments, faculty groups in administration, collegiate governing boards and community leaders, and administration with alumni. Some stress is turned into productive problem solving through the exploration and clarification of differences, the testing of ideas, and the reforms which are based on protest. However, it is also easy to find examples of nonproductive aspects of inter-group stress in the resignation of people, their withdrawal from meaningful contacts between representatives of various groups, the development of stereotypes and prejudice which result from infrequent contacts, and the aggression and destruction to both people and property which escalates and increases in violence as the positions harden in each of the conflicting groups.

Several realities arise which are the result of the above-mentioned situations:

1. Students primarily play a protesting role by communicating the current gripes and complaints of other students, and turn committee membership into a setting for the acting out of authority problems.

2. Complex problems of administration are dealt with in a very superficial manner in joint student-faculty groups, and the real problem solving is done later by faculty and administration. Troublesome issues are buried and the committee becomes a mere window dressing which is resented by all participants involved in the exercise.

3. Students feel inadequate to deal with the issues or with the adults and soon lose motivation to participate further and withdraw either physically or psychologically from collegiate committee activities.

4. Inordinate amounts of time are spent trying to quickly brief student members on the issues involved without any solid background or framework being provided.

Discussion

This writer, during this internship in the Applied Behavioral Sciences Institute in Bethel, Maine, during the summer of 1968 collected some procedures which have been utilized in other campus settings to deal with some of the intra-personal and inter-group stress alluded to above. The format of this paper is to establish a rationale for the use of each procedure and to present the procedure itself. This effort is intended to be a first draft of an ever increasing number of options available to student services personnel in their work.

I. Human Relations Workshop

Using the House Plan model at CCNY, the Human Relations Workshop might be considered for implementation at CSU. The rationale for the inception of

such a program is manifold: (a) to provide opportunities for potential student leaders to maximize self awareness, (b) to establish relationships with other students in a cross-campus manner in order to utilize these interpersonal relationships in working within and between student groups, and (c) to establish an on-going primarily student-staffed workshop administration to serve an ever-increasing number of students who wish to receive such an experience for their own developmental growth.

A number of student needs could be served by such a program.

1. Student leaders could become more perceptive of their roles as leaders and their effect upon their constituencies.

2. As the program developed widening support, faculty and administration could become involved in this type of an experience, thereby bridging the inter-generational gap and providing opportunities for a greater sense of community within the University.

3. Students who typically experience only a cognitive learning within the classroom might develop skills in inter-personal relationships on a feeling level as a result of such a workshop which, has been shown, could greatly enhance the experiential meaning of their University experience.

A point of entry could be a nucleus of student leaders from the residence halls, fraternal groups, student government, and/or the Student Center who have attended a two-week Higher Education laboratory at Cedar City, or who have had T-group experiences on campus prior to the initiation of the Human Relations Workshop. Knowledgeable staff members within the Student Services function would be called upon to give leadership in the initial phases of the program and continuing advice as the program developed a sense of continuity. Trainer resources would need to be found either on the campus or within a reasonable distance in order to preclude major costs. The program would have a base of operation either in the academic setting or in the student activities section of the Student Center. It is possible that some joint advisorship might be established at the outset until the final home for the program could be established.

Two essential ingredients would be necessary as criteria for participation: (a) From those applying for the program, acceptance would require an indication of successful group experiences and of normal functioning in inter-personal relationships. That is to say, a <u>selection</u> process should be instigated to choose those people whom it is ascertained would appropriately benefit from the experience. (b) The application for involvement should be of a <u>voluntary</u> nature without any indication of duress or persuasion from other than the person's own conscience. Ideally, the program should be established in such a manner that a three to five day workshop would be provided for the selected students, and ultimately the workshop would include faculty participants, twice during the academic year. An isolated place off-campus would be used as the site for the workshop. Trainers for groups of approximately eight to twelve participants should be selected on the basis of proven skills in sensitivity training. Procedures established for the workshops should be based upon proven learnings in the field.

Designing the laboratory would be the task of the assembled trainers prior to beginning of the workshop. Experience indicates that the staff should be assembled from available, experienced trainer resources. Depending upon the size of the client population, decisions would need to be made regarding the number of trainers needed.

Seed money would undoubtedly be necessary to establish the program administratively; however, once it is operational it would become more self-supporting. Students would have their tuition paid either by the nominating student organization and/or from personal financing. This writer's experience indicates that once student organizations are convinced of the relevancy and the value of such experience, there would be little difficulty in shouldering the financial responsibilities for the conduct of such a workshop.

A number of issues related to back home application are mentioned and could be considered in the planning of the workshop:

1. Integrating the here and now experience of the workshop with the there and then of the back home situation typically is a difficult matter to bring about. Consideration should be given to on-going back home seminars relating the experiential learnings of the workshop which would consider new processes of interaction and inter-dependence. This area is still a frontier and is mentioned here in order to flag it for future discussion.

2. An aura of curiosity surrounds the workshop, especially for those who have not been participants. Apparently it is difficult to transfer emotional experience through discussion to accurate perceptions in the minds of others who have not attended. Although this is a difficulty shared by anyone who has had a deep personal experience, consideration could be given to appropriate publicity surrounding the workshop and its implications for the campus environment.

3. Consideration could be given to using the workshop as part of the training experience necessary for a number of different campus leadership opportunities: (1) The workshop experience might be considered as part of the in-service training for residence hall assistants. (2) Consideration might be given for a workshop experience upon the election of student leaders prior to their assuming leadership responsibility. (3) Workshops could become part of an available University training program attended upon assumption of the presidency of either residence hall student government, fraternal groups, or Student Center boards. (4) It might be part of the prior experience of a new teaching fellow or instructor interested in improving inter-personal skills in the social sciences area. (5) Although stranger labs (those T-groups whose members do not know each other prior to the experience) have been typically very successful, thought might be given to occasional workshops for family groups on campus. (Examples that might be considered are: Student Services department heads, administrative

executive committees, leadership of Faculty Council, and student councils, etc.) This experience could be facilitative of more productive group operation. It is obvious that great skill is necessary on the part of trainers in both instances; however, special expertise is necessary for the latter type workshop.

An increasing number of universities are sending students, faculty and administrative personnel to higher education and human relations laboratories. However, the number of campuses which have instigated programs such as the one just mentioned is still relatively small. On those campuses, to this writer's knowledge, where an on-going program has been established there seems to be general acceptance of the effects. It is hoped that consideration of this idea might enter the planning stage in the near future.

Faculty-Student Encounters

One thing that appears almost universally on college campuses is much discussion within various sub-groups on a number of controversial topics. This typically takes place in the classroom, either in lecture form or in dialogue where all participants are eligible to make their attitudes known. A much larger amount of discussion on a myriad of topics takes place over coffee, beer, on dates, and in various residences between roommates and occasional friends. The "bull session" is an everyday occurrence.

The above comments are self evident; however, opportunities for faculty and students to exchange feelings outside the classroom is not as prevalent or as pervasive as it might be to facilitate the developmental process of the young adult student. The point of impact between faculty and students still remains the classroom around the discipline of the faculty member. Although numbers of faculty do entertain students in their homes on occasion, and do linger after class periods or beyond the time segments allotted for office hours, there is little structured time for exchange of feelings about matters which concern students personally.

A suggestion aimed at improving the status quo might be the establishment of evening or Saturday encounters between faculty and students. In this out of class setting an opportunity would be provided to relate as persons away from the structural professor-student roles of the classroom. A student and/or faculty facilitator would establish an environment within which the faculty and student participants could help one another to a better understanding of each other's feelings. A suggested format would be to select either randomly or by some adherence to propinquity a group of students and a group of professors who would come together at an agreed-upon time for the purpose of discussion. This could be organized with student services assistance so that during the course of a year a sizeable sample of the population would have an encounter experience together in small groups.

One relevant subject would be to discuss freely in an atmosphere of openness, honesty and trust each member's out-of-class concerns relevant to the University community. In this setting the discipline *per se* would not be the focus, but rather, students might share with members of the faculty some of the pressures inherent in the University setting and thereby receive feedback as to their relevance or need of correction in the best interest of the student's educational progress. The faculty could share their concerns relative to aspects of their

out-of-class University relationship, which may or may not affect their attitudes and effectiveness in the classroom.

The purpose would be to establish relationships between the major sub-cultures of the campus with an eye toward keeping the lines of communication open and for the opportunity of ideas and concerns to be shared across groups on a continuing basis after the initial meeting.

The setting would obviously be an important ingredient and so arranged as to maximize the opportunity for informality and openness. A faculty home where a group of fifteen people might meet together is one possibility. Residence hall lounges or Student Center conference areas are other possibilities.

It is noted that many seminars, colloquia, and extra-curricular lecture programs are in continual operation. The notions set forth here, however, are aimed at providing a supportive environment in which the feelings of the participants about their interdependence and relationship to the University are of prime concern. These exchanges are seen as exceedingly relevant and in need of routinizing as enrollments increase and as faculty responsibilities become more complex.

Campus-Wide Discussions of Relevant Issues

In discussions this writer had with Warren Bennis some notions came to mind which are not original but which might trigger possibilities for new procedures to emerge. Bennis, in his first year as Provost at SUNY-Buffalo felt it appropriate to have what he called University Days where he brought in outside specialists to talk frankly and lead discussions around salient issues. These were issues which, if discussed openly, could bring about better understanding across sub-cultures and stretch many people's vision of their role in the life of the University. Bennis indicated that by taking a projective stance relevant to certain issues on the horizon and by dealing with them squarely, the working-through process would be facilitated more effectively than by waiting and reacting to stress. Relative to CSU, it is known that certain steps are being taken in this area, i.e., discussions by Harvard professors around the subject of drugs. Also, it is apparent from discussions with the Student Center staff that on-going programs such as "Issues and Answers" and a number of other vehicles for the discussion of current concerns are available.

What is suggested, which could be considered somewhat innovative, is the following procedure: The force field analysis model might be considered, which pinpoints supportive and restraining forces which keep an issue lodged in the status quo rather than moving it to its appropriate resolution. A discussion leader, skilled in human relations expertise or with the help of one who is, might bring a sizeable group of students and faculty together into a ballroom or a similarly sized space. After some remarks on the issue under discussion, he would suggest that the assembled group break down into smaller sub-groups of five to ten around easels which are placed at intervals around the hall. Then, in alternate fashion, the smaller groups would start listing supportive factors which would help bring about a resolution to the issue being discussed and at the next easel and then alternately around the room, restraining forces which keep the issue being discussed from being resolved. At the end of about ten minutes half of the membership of each group would be rotated from the easel dealing with restraining forces in this force field model to supporting forces. The composition of the group

would be changed and each person would begin to meet a larger number of the total group. Then, in time segments which would be reduced roughly by one minute for each shift, the leader would continue to move groups of people into new groupings. By the time about 45 minutes had passed, people would have had a chance to share with several others both the discussion of the restraining forces and the supporting forces relevant to the issue being discussed in the larger group.

When this phase was completed, the total group would begin to develop a master list which would pool the resources of the total group for its consideration. This would serve two purposes: (1) Each member would feel like a participant in the total group operation, and (2) the total group would have the benefit of the individual resources inherent within it. The discussion leader using group feed back would then circle five of the most significant restraining and supportive forces. Then the larger group would again break into smaller sub-groups to begin establishing task forces directed toward seeking solutions to the main issue.

General questions which could be resourceful in these task forces in attempting to seek solutions might be as follows:

1. Who is concerned with the situation as it is and its ultimate resolution?

2. Who has the power to make decisions relevant to changing the status quo?

3. What are the things that keep these influential people from acting and why are they being constrained?

4. What are the priority concerns which need to be considered?

The issues are legion. However, those indigenous to a particular campus do vary. It would seem that in a University environment most subjects would be fair game, providing external pressure was not too influential in precluding open discussion about controversial topics. It may seem naive to indicate this, but it would be hoped that many subjects relevant to either the students or the faculty might be discussed in open session and dealt with in the above-mentioned fashion. It is suggested this method provides people a share of involvement and a part in the possible decision-making process. The subject itself would undoubtedly dictate the size of the population involved. Also, the prominence of the speaker or the discussion leader would have a great deal to do with a number of people participating. It is hoped that a wedding of the issue and the outside speaker could be achieved in such a way that an appropriately sizeable group would participate.

An election year political model would be an appropriate vehicle. Candidates or their protagonists might be urged to involve themselves in this kind of enterprise rather than a typical whistle-stop type appearance, thereby involving a larger number of the members of the community in active participation. Other areas of consideration might be student power, drugs, relevance of residence hall or fraternal living, student involvement in academic administration, the quality of the learning environment, etc. The procedure is the relevant point here rather than the topic <u>per se</u>.

In essence, with this method participation could develop to a high degree on the part of all involved, which is typically not the case in the traditional lecture model.

Problem Solving Designs

I. The first notion evolved from a discussion at Bethel with Ronald Lippitt. A vehicle for this procedure could be a discussion of what residence halls might be like in five years. Other possible areas of discussion might be what fraternal organizations, student government or the academic learning experience might be like in five years. The design is exciting as it involves all parties who in some way will be affected by potential change. The purpose is to bring about an inter-generational confrontation. Rather than have participants be confronted with a problem solving task, the design would call for the participants to initially fantasize about what residence halls would be like five years from now. Participants would include those directly involved from the senior staff to student residents.

This fantasy model which structures the group's activity toward estimating what the future might be like doesn't start with the inherent pain of a direct problem solving confrontation where groups are required to immediately come up with a residence hall plan for five years hence. If fifty people were involved in this design, the groups could be broken down into smaller groups of approximately five to seven each, with each group having a member from each echelon of involvement. That is to say, within each sub-group there would be a member of the residence hall administration, a member from the residence hall staff, a student member from the residence hall student government, and one or more students living within the residence halls. Each person would be required to spend about fifteen minutes writing down his fantasy. It is interesting to note that when Mr. Lippitt did this exercise, some surprising points of encounter emerged. The central staff when viewing the residence hall picture five years hence thought in terms of two towers, each housing a separate sex with communal commissary, recreation and study facilities being shared by both sexes. At the second level, the residence hall directors or staff talked in terms of students by the same sex living in apartments, with these apartments being scattered so that the sexes would mingle on the same floor. At the lowest level, students themselves thought in terms of males and females possibly sharing the same room if it seemed to suit their particular interests.

The next phase in the design involved sharing the various fantasies and beginning the process of resolving the differences. Here a number of paths could be utilized. One which seems appropriate would be to use the force field analysis (mentioned above) where each person would spend fifteen minutes listing the supportive and restraining forces which might keep his particilar fantasy from moving toward its desired goal. These would then be shared in the sub-groups and efforts would be made to reduce differences and develop consensus.

The third phase would be to amalgamate the sub-groups' work by sharing each sub-group's resources with the total group assembled and then having a group discussion around ways in which progress could be made toward an acceptable solution that would be acceptable to all.

In sum, the purpose of using the fantasy model rather than the strict problem solving model initially is to provide the participants an opportunity not to start from pain, as their need at this point is to get away from where the pain is. In dealing with fantasy about potentialities, pain ultimately comes out but in the direction of doing something about resolving the distance between the extreme positions. When the structured use of perceived differences with other groups becomes the instrument rather than the focus of the encounter it is suggested that actual movement can and does take place.

II. Another problem solving design is the exchanged use of tapes generated by role groups around (1) what a particular role group feels about another role group, and (2) what it is perceived the other role group feels about it. This might be used in a Saturday seminar related to student involvement in the administration of the University. A group of administrators, faculty and students would be called together and assembled into groups by roles. Each group might spend half an hour suggesting a group of attitudes for (1) and (2) above for each of the other groups. The next half-hour period would be used to tape these attitudes (prepared in first person singular statement form). These tapes would then be given to the other groups.

The next phase would be listening time for each group to experience the perceived statements of the other two groups toward it and its statements regarding the other groups. This would be followed by an internal role group discussion of these differences.

The next phase would be to mix the sub-groups for purposes of discussion about the tapes and their effects upon each individual's thinking relative to the roles held by others and his own role and its effect upon other's roles. This could be followed by the last phase, which would be to return to the own role group to do a force field analysis around ways in which each individual might begin to rethink his own feelings about collaboration with people in other role groups in the University community.

III. A half-day workshop involving faculty, students and administration might be built around the notion of having the total assembled body break into sub-groups of fifteen and giving each group a statement, controversial in nature, which would then be studied carefully by each member of the sub-group. A topic used, for example might be the relevancy, the appropriateness, and legality of student protest demonstrations. The workshop would proceed as follows:

1. Each sub-group of fifteen would be broken into two groups, one half being observers who would form a circle around the outside, while the participants' task would be to reach agreement on how the participant group felt about the controversial statement. The observer group on the outside would observe the process of the decision-making procedure. Equal time intervals would be given to the participants to begin working toward agreement. The participants would then change chairs with the observers and the observers would go to the

middle to discuss the decision-making process. After an appropriate time interval the participants would return to the center, changing chairs with the observers, to continue the decision-making process. This switching would continue until such time when the participants would be asked to judge their own product on the basis of its quality and the observers would judge the decision-making process on the basis of work efficiency. What should come out of the experience would be for all involved to perceive the interrelatedness of the quality of the product with work efficiency. The learning to be accomplished would be to perceive on a feeling level how process oftentimes inhibits work.

After this part of the design had been accomplished each member in attendance might be asked to respond to two questions: (1) What was the worthwhileness of the experience, and (2) would he be willing to participate in a similar experience again. It is suggested that this design might be facilitative of inter-group understanding and, therefore, applicable to a number of different situations on the CSU campus.

IV. Another exciting experience witnessed during the Education Leaders Laboratory at Bethel was the black-white microlab confrontation model. This could be used in any situation where polar opposites confront one another, such as inter-generational concerns, male-female hangups, leader-led situations, or even in the political area of conservative versus liberal.

The first phase is to involve representatives of both parties to the dispute in the planning of the lab. This rationale is centered around the emotional distance of the two opposing camps toward one another. In a brainstorming session all members would begin identifying major hangups, stereotypes and issues of communication which would begin to focus the participants' minds on the concept of problem solving together. The reception of the design by the total community involved in the dispute is hopefully obtained as there is a validity in the planning process due to the joint composition of the planning committee. The planning group creates a tape in which the perceptions of the various groups toward one another is developed. Each tape deals with four categories: (1) black anger, (2) black fear, (3) white anger, and (4) white fear. This tape is produced in such a way that all of the items under any given category, e.g., black anger or white fear, comes out randomly with no identification of the category of the statement.

The second phase is to bring the entire group in the laboratory together, i. ., the blacks and the whites. The first confrontation between the two groups is not face-to-face, but rather by tape, and the group's responsibility is to attempt to identify the category under which the various statements might be subsumed. The total group is then divided into groups of three to discuss how they feel about the statements which they heard on the tape and to which category they ascribed the various statements. The groups then become six in number and the tape is played

over again. This time, prior to each statement a staff member identifies the category of the statement that follows. The rationale here is to break down stereoptomy and point out the fact that there is multiple causation as far as attitudes are concerned. What becomes very apparent is that each person in the room typically ascribes a statement to the wrong category. The process begins to move toward sharing in a face-to-face fashion, not yet confrontation, in the hard task of beginning to establish relationships.

In the third phase the groups still six in number produce one episode lasting about five minutes in which they role play for the entire group. The rationale here is to begin to legitimize face-to-face dialogue, identification and awareness.

The fourth phase, which moves from individual awareness to action, is aimed at developing skills in practicing and coping with back home situations. Each group now has to decide what confronting situation back home would most need to be practiced during the next time segment. The group then gives this sample of back home confrontation experience to the group nearest it. The group receiving the confrontation then begins to practice in role-playing fashion the back home situation.

The fifth phase has the following rationale: The black group begins to feel supported and legitimitized and feels that it is a legitimate resource group. The entire group then begins to plan for the next experience which it might have together.

It can be seen that although considerable planning would be necessary for such a confrontation meeting, the benefits accruing might be inestimable.

V. In brief form, another problem-solving design might be around the issue of great differences in power. Students-faculty, administrators-students, etc. are appropriate client populations. Typically there is very little feed back about feed back, and this is the purpose here. There typically is a passive hostile stance toward receiving help when considerable differences in power exist. After the two groups have come together the subservient group is asked to check two scales: (1) to what degree are the people who are trying to be helpful actually helpful, and (2) can you think of any things you would like to tell those who help you so that they might be more helpful in the future?

The authority group receives this information, and after internal consultation gives feed back on the feed back. The authority group is instructed to be open and honest about agreements and disagreements with the subservient group's reactions to its effectiveness. The hoped-for result is that each group has a better understanding of the aspirations of the other group and roadblocks to a facilitative relationship.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper is just a beginning! It is hoped that it will provide the launching pad for earnest exploration in the area of planned change. It is suggested that a cross-role task force be developed to spend considerable time in the coming months for further exploration of possible designs and appropriate implementation in this University community. Stepping into the future and looking back might be more productive than reacting in the present and falling between the chairs.